

Members

Sen. Brent Steele, Chairperson
Sen. Dennis Kruse
Sen. Gary Dillon
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. Earline Rogers
Sen. Connie Sipes
Rep. Cleo Duncan, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Thomas Saunders
Rep. Eric Turner
Rep. John Aguilera
Rep. Terri Austin
Rep. Charlie Brown



INTERIM COMMITTEE ON MOTOR VEHICLE ISSUES

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Authority: Legislative Council Resolution 05-01

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 9, 2005
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Senate Chamber
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Brent Steele, Chairperson; Sen. Dennis Kruse; Sen. Gary Dillon; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. Earline Rogers; Sen. Connie Sipes; Rep. Cleo Duncan, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Thomas Saunders; Rep. Eric Turner; Rep. John Aguilera; Rep. Terri Austin; Rep. Charlie Brown.

Members Absent: None.

The Chair, Senator Brent Steele, called the first meeting of the Interim Committee on Motor Vehicle Issues to order at 1:07 p.m. Senator Steel introduced Committee members and the staff.

Senator Steele called upon Committee members for opening comments. Senator Dillon commented that there are many unhappy folks throughout the state and that he is waiting to hear from Commissioner Silverman. Representative Duncan expressed similar comments, but she also added that she hopes that the Commissioner will approach the closings with an open mind, especially for those branches in rural areas. Both Representatives Aguilera and Saunders commented that the actions of Commissioner Silverman seemed out of character. Representative C. Brown said that the closings were beyond the pale, while Senator Craycraft questioned the reasoning behind the branch closing in Delaware County.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Senator Rogers echoed Representative C. Brown's comments. She also asked what type of data must a city or town present to the Commissioner to show that a particular license branch should not be closed. Senator Sipes said she had a philosophical concern about efficiency and cost-effectiveness vs. service to the people. Representative Turner wanted to know the goal of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) with the closings of license branches, along with the criteria and variables used by the BMV to make decisions. He also wanted to know about the potential savings to be derived from the closings of branches and what will be done with the savings.

Senator Kruse commented that government is more than a business. He commented about the costs to citizens with the closing of license branches and to those citizens willing to pay additional fees to keep license branches open. Representative Austin agreed with the previous comments. She too wanted to know the criteria used in the closing of license branches.

Senator Steele recognized Ms. Jennifer Thuma, Director of Legislative Affairs for Governor Daniels, who introduced Mr. Joel Silverman, Commissioner of the BMV. Mr. Silverman began his Power Point presentation (Exhibit 1). He said that there were eight things considered in the closing of branches: (a) one branch per county; (b) customer transactions; (c) 30 minute or less drive time; (d) capacity to absorb transactions of closed branches; (e) status of leases and cancellation of leases; (f) branch moves already in progress; (g) branch proximity to other branches; and (h) population by county and recent changes.

Mr. Silverman told the Committee that he did not look at revenue, profitability, or the average cost per walk-in customer. Mr. Silverman said that his goal is consistency.

The Chair recognized Committee members for additional comments. Representative Brown remained concerned about the closing of the Gary branch. Senator Dillon wanted to know about community partnerships to keep branches open. Senator Craycraft wanted to know more about the Muncie branches, while Senator Rogers wanted to know what could Gary do to keep open the branch scheduled for closing.

Representative Aguilera commented about voter ID and that there are more voter IDs than voters in northwest Indiana. Representative Saunders said that the meetings with the BMV have not been conducive to anything. Representative Duncan wanted to know if the BMV would decide to award license branches to automotive dealerships. Representative Turner wanted Mr. Silverman to share with Committee members the analysis for the estimated savings as a result of branch closings. Representative Brown wanted to know more about partnerships with the BMV.

Senator Steele called upon members of the legislature who are not members of the Interim Committee on Motor Vehicle Issues to address the Committee. Representative Koch distributed Preliminary Draft (PD) 3003 (Exhibit 2). Representative Koch said that PD 3003 would require the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Commission (BMVC) to operate at least one license branch in the county seat of each county. Representative Borders suggested that the BMV reduce management. Representative Ruppel suggested a regional branch model approach. He also told the Committee that citizens of North Manchester were willing to pay higher fees to keep that branch open.

The Chair called upon citizens who had signed up to address the Committee. Ms. Diane Cartmel of Brownstown told the Committee that because of changing demographics, it is imperative to keep the Brownstown license branch open. Ms. Jane Risley of Indianapolis and Mr. David Benefiel addressed the Committee. Mr. Frank Fuchs of Shelby County told the Committee that local governments should be able to partner with the BMV.

Mr. Stephen Key, General Counsel of the Hoosier Press Association, said that his focus was on legislation that was passed in 2001 at the last minute as an addition to the budget bill. He said that the code cite is IC 9-16-1-2.5, which requires, before a license branch can be closed, that the BMV must hold a public hearing in the county where the license branch is located and requires the commissioner to receive unlimited testimony on the possible closing of the branch. Mr. Key's first concern is a question of timing. He said that the public hearings were being held, not in the interest of public input into the decision making process, but merely to fulfill the legislative requirement. Mr. Key said that his second concern related to whether the public was receiving proper advance notice of the public hearings being held by the BMV.

Mr. Don Tatlock of Seymour and Mr. Max Middendorf of Jackson County requested reconsideration for Brownstown. Mr. John Newhart told the Committee that he appreciates what Mr. Silverman is attempting to do. Ms. Becky Fee, Brownstown Clerk-Treasurer, said that the Brownstown branch was built to BMV specifications.

Representative Duncan said that she hoped that all would work together with constructive ideas. The Chair announced that the next meeting would be held on August 30 at 1:00 p.m. Senator Steele adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.